Bringing action research to the curriculum development process

[1]

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Abstract:

In this article, we describe our efforts as project coordinators to negotiate directions and meanings at the initial stages of a childcare curriculum development project for children from birth to age five in the Province of New Brunswick, Canada. Understanding curriculum as a complex relational dynamic that is shaped by the multiple social and cultural contexts in which teachers and learners dwell, and mindful of the ways in which our discursive practices simultaneously include and exclude, we accepted, as an ethical matter, our responsibility to create spaces for critical conversations in which practitioners' voices can be heard. Reflecting on the project proposal and notes from our meetings with practitioners, it is evident that while we have been somewhat successful in making explicit our personal views on a social constructivist approach to curriculum development and presenting counterpoints to the dominant discourse of school readiness and a culture of performativity, we have, thus far, been less successful in fully engaging practitioners. As we move forward with the project we consider how we might engage more deeply with practitioners in critical conversations about curricula content and form. We consider the possibilities of emancipatory and collaborative action research with practitioners that will, in the final analysis, enable us to extend the evaluative question 'Are the results good, for whom, and in what ways?' to 'Says who?'
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